

Message Text

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ACTION PM-03

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 SS-15 NSC-05 CIAE-00 DODE-00

INR-07 NSAE-00 PA-01 USIA-06 PRS-01 SP-02 H-02 ACDA-05

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FM AMEMBASSY BONN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9141

INFO AMEMBASSY BERLIN

AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY VIENNA

USMISSION USBERLIN

USMISSION NATO BRUSSELS

USDEL MBFR VIENNA

USNMR SHAPE

CINC EUR VAIHINGEN

CINC USAREUR HEIDELBERG

CINC USAFE RAMSTEIN

USDEL MC BRUSSELS

AMCONSUL FRANKFURT

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 BONN 05424

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: OREP, XG, GW

SUBJECT: CONGRESSIONAL VISIT TO GERMANY

REF: STATE 55188 AND FOLLOWING

BEGIN SUMMARY: THE FEDERAL MINISTRY OF DEFENSE WENT OUT OF ITS WAY TO MAKE THE CONGRESSIONAL VISIT TO GERMANY A SUCCESS. NOTABLY, MINISTER OF DEFENSE LEBER CUT SHORT HIS EASTER VACATION SO HE COULD PERSONALLY PARTICIPATE IN THE DISCUSSIONS. THESE EFFORTS WERE GREATLY APPRECIATED BY THE CONGRESSIONAL DELEGATION.
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END SUMMARY

1. THE CONGRESSIONAL VISITORS ARRIVED IN HANNOVER AND WERE GREETED BY LT. GENERAL HILDEBRAND, INSPECTOR OF THE FEDERAL ARMY (EQUIVALENT OF OUR ARMY CHIEF OF STAFF). GERMAN HELICOPTERS TOOK THE OFFICIAL PARTY TO MUNSTERLAGER WHERE THEY OBSERVED A GERMAN ARMORED BATTALION EXERCISE "STRONG SHIELD." THE PARTY ALSO HAD AN OPPORTUNITY TO SEE A FIRING DEMONSTRATION BY A BRITISH ARTILLERY UNIT AT THIS SAME NATO TRAINING SITE. AFTER A FIELD LUNCH, THE PARTY WAS HELICOPTERED BACK TO HANNOVER WHERE THEY REJOINED THE WIVES WHO HAD FOLLOWED A SEPARATE SIGHT-SEEING PROGRAM.

2. THE CONGRESSIONAL VISITORS THEN FLEW TO COLOGNE FROM WHERE THE OFFICIAL DELEGATION WAS TAKEN TO THE HARDTHOEHE (THE GERMAN PENTAGON). THE CONGRESSMEN WERE GREETED THERE BY MINISTER OF DEFENSE LEBER, ADMIRAL ZIMMERMANN (THE EQUIVALENT OF OUR CHAIRMAN OF THE JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF), AND OTHER DIGNITARIES. SHORTLY THEREAFTER, CODEL HUMPHREY/SCOTT (SEE STATE 65444 AND FOLLOWING) JOINED THE PARTY AND PARTICIPATED IN THE REST OF THE PROGRAM. MAJOR GENERAL BERNHARD OF THE FEDERAL GERMAN ARMED FORCES STAFF GAVE A PRESENTATION ENTITLED, "THE MILITARY STRATEGIC SITUATION OF THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF GERMANY, THE GERMAN CONTRIBUTION TO THE DEFENSE OF THE ALLIANCE, AND THE GERMAN POSITION ON TOPICAL POLITICO-MILITARY ISSUES." AFTERWARDS, MINISTER LEBER AMPLIFIED ON HIS REMARKS. THIS WAS A STANDARD GERMAN PRESENTATION: IT EMPHASIZED THE KEY ROLE PLAYED BY NATO IN THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC'S DEFENSE POLICY; IT UNDERSCORED THE CRUCIAL IMPORTANCE OF AMERICAN TROOP STRENGTH IN EUROPE FOR WHICH EUROPEAN TROOPS COULD NOT SUBSTITUTE; AND IT POINTED WITH PRIDE TO THE FRG'S MAJOR CONTRIBUTION TO THE COMMON DEFENSE, BOTH FINANCIALLY AND IN ARMED FORCES.

3. THE SENATORS AND CONGRESSMEN THEN COMMENTED UPON, AND ASKED QUESTIONS INSPIRED BY, THE REMARKS OF THEIR GERMAN HOSTS. SOME OF THE

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HIGH POINTS WERE AS FOLLOWS. TO THE OBSERVATION THAT SOVIET REPRESENTATIVES IN GENEVA HAD TOLD THE CONGRESSMEN THAT THEIR REAL FEAR WAS THE MILITARY THREAT POSED BY THE FRG AND NOT ONE POSED BY THE U.S., MINISTER LEBER OBSERVED THAT THE SOVIETS HAD NO JUSTIFIABLE REASON FOR SUCH A FEAR. THE CONFIGURATION OF THE GERMAN ARMY WAS DEFENSIVE, RATHER THAN OFFENSIVE, AND THE SOVIETS KNEW THIS. IN THIS

CONNECTION, ONE CONGRESSMAN NOTED THAT THE SOVIETS
APPEARED TO BE INTERESTED IN A CUT IN THE FEDERAL
ARMED FORCES DURING THE FIRST STAGE OF AN MBFR AGREE-
MENT RATHER THAN IN A CUT IN AMERICAN STRENGTH.
MINISTER LEBER REPLIED THAT THE SOVIETS UNDOUBTEDLY
FEEL THAT IT WOULD BE POLITICALLY IMPOSSIBLE FOR THE
U.S. AND OTHER NATO ALLIES TO MAINTAIN THEIR TROOP

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 02 OF 02 BONN 05424

STRENGTH IN THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC IF THE FEDERAL

REPUBLIC'S OWN ARMED FORCES WERE BEING REDUCED. THUS, THE SOVIETS HOPED TO OBTAIN A REDUCTION IN NON-GERMAN NATO FORCES AT NO COST TO THEMSELVES.

4. SEVERAL QUESTIONS WERE POSED TO MINISTER LEBER ABOUT THE MILITARY BALANCE BETWEEN NATO AND THE WARSAW PACT. TO THESE THE GERMAN DEFENSE MINISTER REPLIED THAT AN OVERALL BALANCE DOES EXIST, BUT IT IS A NEAR THING AND THERE IS NO MARGIN FOR NATO
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REDUCTIONS. TO THE CONGRESSIONAL OBSERVATION THAT THE U.S. WAS SPENDING A GREATER PERCENTAGE OF ITS GNP ON DEFENSE THAN IS THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC, MINISTER LEBER MADE TWO MAIN POINTS. FIRST OF ALL, IF THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC DEPENDED UPON A VOLUNTARY ARMY AS DOES THE U.S., THE PERCENTAGE OF THE FRG'S GNP DEVOTED TO DEFENSE WOULD RISE TO 5.5 PERCENT. SECONDLY, IF ONE DEDUCTED THE SPECIAL U.S. COSTS INVOLVED IN MAINTAINING ITS NUCLEAR DETERRENT AND IN CARRYING OUT ITS WORLDWIDE COMMITMENTS, THE PERCENTAGE OF GNP DEVOTED TO DEFENSE BY OUR TWO COUNTRIES WOULD BE SEEN AS APPROXIMATELY EQUAL. TO THIS SENATOR SCHWEIKER REPLIED THAT OTHER ALLIES SHOULD DO MORE CONVENTIONALLY BECAUSE THE U.S. DOES PROVIDE THE NUCLEAR DETERRENT.

5. SEVERAL QUESTIONS POSED TO MINISTER LEBER SEEMED TO BE DIRECTED TOWARDS THE IDEA THAT U.S. FORCES NEED NOT BE STATIONED IN EUROPE BUT COULD BE BROUGHT TO THE CONTINENT WHEN AND IF NECESSARY. MINISTER LEBER NOTED THAT IT HAD TAKEN THE U.S. TWO YEARS TO MUSTER ITS FORCES DURING WORLD WARS I AND II; HE STATED THAT NO SUCH TIME LUXURY WOULD BE POSSIBLE IN CASE OF SOVIET AGGRESSION. THE MINISTER EMPHASIZED THAT THE FRG WAS INTERESTED PRIMARILY IN FORCES IN BEING. IT WAS LESS INTERESTED IN FORCES WHICH MIGHT BE BROUGHT TO BEAR FIVE DAYS AFTER THE OUTBREAK OF HOSTILITIES AND EVEN LESS IN THOSE WHICH WOULD COME INTO ACTION 30 DAYS LATER. MINISTER LEBER SAID HE COULD NOT CONCEIVE OF A LONG CONVENTIONAL WAR BEING FOUGHT IN EUROPE. THE MINISTER PROFESSED HIMSELF UNABLE TO ANSWER THE QUESTION AS TO HOW MUCH MORE CONVENTIONAL FORCES NATO WOULD REQUIRE IF IT WERE TO DISPENSE WITH TACTICAL NUCLEAR WEAPONS EXCEPT TO STATE THAT THE INCREASE WOULD BE EXTREMELY GREAT.

6. THE DAY'S PROGRAM WAS CONCLUDED BY A COCKTAIL/ BUFFET OFFERED BY MINISTER LEBER. THE CONGRESSIONAL GROUP LEFT BONN THE NEXT MORNING.

7. OBVIOUSLY MINISTER LEBER'S ANSWERS DID NOT
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COMPLETELY SATISFY ALL OF THE CONGRESSMEN ON ALL
ISSUES. NEVERTHELESS, THEY WERE CLEARLY IMPRESSED
BY WHAT THEY HAD SEEN AND HEARD ABOUT THE GERMAN
DEFENSE CONTRIBUTION TO NATO. THEY WERE EQUALLY
IMPRESSED BY MINISTER LEBER'S FORTHRIGHT RESPONSES
TO THEIR QUESTIONS. HIS COURTESY IN CUTTING
SHORT HIS VACATION IN ORDER TO MEET WITH THEM WAS
LIKEWISE FAVORABLY NOTED.
HILLENBRAND

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